

EFFORT TO DISCREDIT KHRUSHCHEV?

Memoirs Stir Speculation

STATINTL

MOSCOW (AP) — Kremlin secrecy has long made Moscow a city of mysteries, but few of them have stirred as much speculation in embassy chanceries and ordinary households as the Khrushchev memoirs being published in Life magazine.

Ever since Time, Inc., announced earlier this month that it would publish the reminiscences of former Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev, a long series of unanswered questions has been raised.

Are the papers authentic, as Life asserts? Are they a fabrication, possibly produced by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, as the Soviet government newspaper Izvestia claims? If they were really produced by Khrushchev, how did they get to the West? And whose interest is being served by their publication?

Kremlin Blessing Seen

One of the latest theories, said to be true by a Soviet informant who has furnished reliable information in the past, is that the reminiscences are authentic and were published with the blessing of high Kremlin officials.

The informant said Khrushchev started dictating the reminiscences on a tape recorder as a documentation of his years as premier and chief of the Communist party.

High officials learned of the project, the informant said, and hoped to discredit and stop it by making the early portion available for publication abroad before revision and editing.

The memoirs have not been published before. Time, Inc., says they go only up to 1962. The informant said the Kremlin did not want to see them carried through to 1964, the year Khrushchev was ousted by the collective leadership headed by

Communist party General Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev.

The first installment, published in the Nov. 27 issue of Life, contains numerous factual errors. The informant said this is because Khrushchev did them from memory.

The Kremlin believed that by getting the memoirs published with the errors intact, the informant said, the project might be discredited.

Khrushchev would then get so upset, this line of reasoning goes, that he would abandon the project.

Those who question this theory point out that the Kremlin has many ways of stopping Khrushchev without all the fuss and publicity that is accompanying publication in the West.

The controversy has brought Khrushchev back into the spotlight after years of obscurity. For the first time since shortly after his ouster, his name appeared in the Soviet press — as a signature on his denial that he sent any memoirs to any publisher, in the East or the West.

No Firm Denial

The vague wording of his statement and its failure to deny that he had prepared any memoirs only added to the mystery, however.

An early theory was that the memoirs were taken abroad by Victor Louis, an enigmatic Soviet citizen who frequently seems to serve as an East-West go-between. A Scandinavian report that Louis stayed in a Copenhagen hotel at the same time as two Time-Life editors last summer seemed to back up this theory.

Louis denied any connection with the project, however, and there are many who feel he is being truthful. They reason that he is too obvious a channel and that his presence in Copenhagen was an international diversion

from the real go-between.

Theories abound that the Soviet secret police had a hand in the matter for unclear reasons. Other speculation suggests that some internal Soviet political split or factional rivalry was involved.

Another version is that the publication would somehow serve the purposes of the Communist party and its 24th Congress next March.

No solid basis for any of these versions has been established. Until one is, the speculation is likely to go on and on.

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